FREE ISSUE | **REVIEW** FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE | **FEATURE** THE LAST OF US PART II



ISSUE 70 MAY/JUNE 2020

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SpongeBob SQUAREPANTS

BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM Rehydrated

FUTURE GAMING | ALL THE NEXT-GEN SYSTEM SPECS INSIDE



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28
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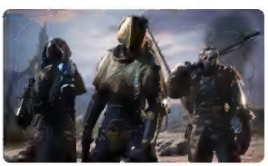
Windows 10

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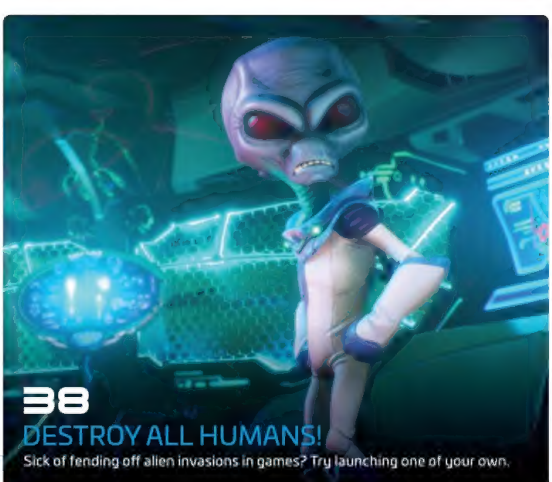
review



FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE 48



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THE LAST OF US PART II
One of the greatest PlayStation games of all time gets a new chapter.



38
DESTROY ALL HUMANS!
Sick of fending off alien invasions in games? Try launching one of your own.

PS4

GREATNESS AWAITS

PREDATOR

HUNTING GROUNDS



HUNT OR BE HUNTED

AVAILABLE NOW

MATURE 17+
M
ESRB

Blood and Gore
Drug Reference
Intense Violence
Partial Nudity
Strong Language

In-Game Purchases / Users Interact

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welcome
FROM THE EDITORS



ALL **TOGETHER**

The world has changed quite dramatically since we published our last issue of *Walmart Gamecenter* magazine. Over the past few weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted nearly every aspect of life around the globe. Our hearts go out to everyone affected.

The world of gaming has certainly seen some significant changes, as well. Events that usually bring the biggest gaming reveals of the year, like E3, Gamescom, and San Diego Comic-Con, have either been cancelled or forced to shift to an online-only format. Numerous games have been delayed past their planned release dates, with *The Last of Us Part II* being perhaps the most high-profile example—though thankfully the added wait wasn't too long in the end.

In this challenging time, however, gaming has also become a beacon of hope. Our hobby can help us unwind, explore new worlds from the comfort of our homes, and stay connected to our friends and family even when circumstances require us to be physically apart. Online gaming services like the PlayStation Network, Xbox Live, and Steam are reporting record traffic. On Switch, *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* has become perhaps the defining game of this time, with its stress-free gameplay attracting millions of fans.

The World Health Organization has even launched a campaign encouraging us to stay at home and play video games. That's right—no matter what your parents ever told you, gaming is officially good for your health.

With major sporting events canceled, organizations like NASCAR have adapted by televising contests in the motorsports simulator *iRacing* featuring real drivers going head-to-head online. Professional basketball and soccer players are participating in high-profile tournaments in *NBA 2K* and *FIFA*. Even esports games that don't have any traditional counterpart are seeing surges in viewerships, scratching our itch to watch competitions between the best of the best.

We hope this issue of *Walmart Gamecenter* will likewise help you relax, and hopefully introduce you to a few new titles you can pick up and enjoy in the coming months. If you're looking to relive yesterday's classics with modern polish, we've definitely got you covered, with a big story on *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated*, a preview of *Destroy All Humans!*, and our verdict on *Final Fantasy VII Remake*. If you're in the market for something totally new and technologically cutting edge, we can help there as well, with looks at the samurai action game *Ghost of Tsushima*, the co-op sci-fi shooter *Outriders*, and Naughty Dog's *The Last of Us Part II*.

> In this challenging time, however, gaming has also become a beacon of hope.

With any luck, by the time you're reading this issue, the situation around the world will be improving. In the meantime, stay safe, and know that the *Walmart Gamecenter* team will continue working hard to keep you at the center of all things gaming.

Josh Harmon and Mollie L Patterson
EDITORS

Walmart Gamecenter
MAY/JUNE 2020

PUBLISHER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
STEVE B. HARRIS

EDITORIAL
EDITORS
JOSH HARMON
MOLLIE L PATTERSON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
MICHAEL GOROFF
COPY EDITOR
ALEXANDRA HALL

CONTRIBUTORS
PAUL SEMEL
MARC CAMRON

ART DIRECTION
MICHAEL HOBBS
MICHAEL STASSUS

EGM MEDIA, LLC
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PRESIDENT STEVE HARRIS
ASST TO THE PRESIDENT ANGELA ADAMS
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ACCOUNTING DZ ABREGOV

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
GAMECENTER@EGMNOW.NET

ADVERTISING
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR JEFF EISENBERG
ADVERTISING MANAGER ELIZABETH SCOTT

FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
800-875-6298, EXT. 120
ADSALES@EGMNOW.NET

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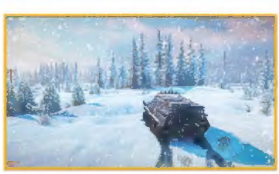


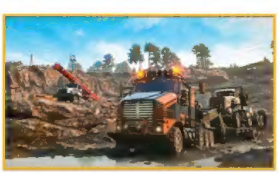
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EVERYONE E ESRB — Search for more detailed rating summaries at esrb.org

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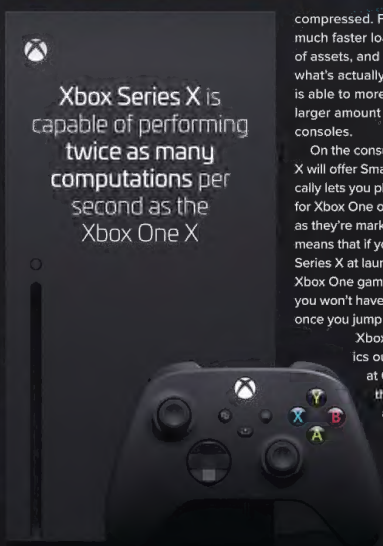
MICROSOFT REVEALS **FULL SPECS** OF **XBOX SERIES X**

Microsoft fully pulled back the curtains and revealed all of the technical specs for its upcoming next-gen console, the Xbox Series X, including details about its CPU, GPU, internal storage, and backward compatibility with games from prior Xbox consoles.

Microsoft detailed the Xbox Series X's impressive custom processor, which it designed in tandem with AMD. Its Zen 2 CPU clocks 3.8 GHz for more than four times the performance of the Xbox One X, while its RDNA 2 graphics processor will offer significant advancements over anything seen in a console today.

The latter's 12 teraflops means that the Xbox Series X is capable of performing twice as many computations per second as the Xbox One X, as well as providing features such as DirectX Raytracing for lifelike lighting. Its 16 GB GDDR6 memory, with 10 GB accessible by the GPU, is the same that's used in top-of-the-line PC graphics cards today.

Similar to certain models of the existing Xbox One line, the Xbox Series X's SSD will offer 1 TB of internal storage. More importantly, however, the Xbox Series X SSD is capable of delivering 2.4 GB/s raw input/output processing, and 4.8 GB/s compressed. For players, that means much faster loading times, less pop-in of assets, and a higher level of detail in what's actually on the screen, as the SSD is able to more quickly retrieve a much larger amount of information than prior consoles.



On the consumer side, the Xbox Series X will offer Smart Delivery, which automatically lets you play games you purchased for Xbox One on Xbox Series X, as long as they're marked as Smart Delivery. This means that if you don't upgrade to the Xbox Series X at launch and you're still buying Xbox One games come this holiday season, you won't have to buy those games again once you jump into next-gen gaming.

Xbox Series X's baseline graphics output will be 4K resolution at 60 frames per second (fps), though some games will be able to output 120 fps to 120Hz TVs and monitors. HDMI 2.1 also means less latency, so competitive gaming will become more viable on Microsoft's console when it launches in holiday 2020.

by the numbers

2-plus million
Copies of the *Resident Evil 3* remake shipped in its first five days of release, according to Capcom.

0
Spiders you'll need to face in Obsidian Entertainment's upcoming survival adventure *Grounded* if you turn on its arachnophobia mode.

34,980
Cost in Japanese yen (or approximately $325 U.S. dollars) for Hori's new *Hatsune Miku: Project Diva* dedicated controller.

1570
Songs available in Ubisoft's *Rocksmith* as of its latest and final song pack.

5%
Amount of revenue from *GTA Online* and *Red Dead Online* developer Rockstar is donating to COVID-19 relief efforts.



SONY UNVEILS PLAYSTATION 5 SPECS, DUALSENSE CONTROLLER

Sony finally unveiled the PlayStation 5's technical details in full, as well as its new DualSense controller.

The CPU powering the PlayStation 5 will be an AMD Zen 2 with 8 cores, 16 threads, and a variable frequency of up to 3.5 GHz, and its AMD RDNA 2 GPU will allow for raytracing. These specs—along with its 16 GB GDDR6 system memory—are pretty much identical to those of the Xbox Series X, though the PS5's 10.3 teraflops do fall just slightly short of the Xbox's 12 teraflops.

However, where the PS5 does shine is in its SSD. While its storage capacities are slightly under 1 TB, weighing in at 825 GB, its read bandwidth clocks in at a blistering speed of 5.5 GB/s raw. Practically speaking, this means that the PS5's loading times will be as close to nonexistent as possible on a console, with faster asset retrieval than ever before. Like its competitor, the PS5 will be compatible with 4K 120Hz TVs and 8K TVs utilizing HDMI 2.1 for even less input latency.



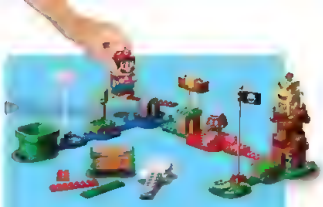
Audio is another aspect that Sony is focusing on with the PS5. Touting a new Tempest 3D AudioTech custom engine, the PS5 is targeting the most realistic and immersive sound output you've ever heard on a console.

One area where Sony is trying to pick up the slack is with its backward compatibility offerings. Lead system architect Mark Cerny stated that the PlayStation team is tracking its top 100 most-played PlayStation 4 games for backward compatibility with the PS5. However, platform planning and management SVP Hideaki Nishino later clarified this by stating that "the overwhelming majority of the 4,000+ PS4 titles will be playable on PS5" with "higher or more stable frame rates and potentially higher resolutions."

> Sony revealed the **DualSense** controller. Its **curvy, wider** design is different from traditional **PlayStation** controllers.

Finally, Sony revealed the DualSense controller. Its curvy, wider design is different from traditional PlayStation controllers, but it offers a ton of interesting features like a built-in microphone, a new Create button (details forthcoming), haptic feedback for more realistic rumble, and adaptive triggers that make the tension in the shoulder buttons correlate with what's happening on the screen.

The DualSense controller will launch with the PS5 during the 2020 holiday season.



IT'S-A ME, LEGO MARIO!

Two of the top names in entertaining everyone from the young to the young at heart are Nintendo and LEGO. Now, the two companies are coming together for a new project that mixes the world's most famous brick smasher with the world's most popular brick builders.

LEGO Super Mario is a new line of LEGO sets created around Mario and his adventures in the Mushroom Kingdom. Kicking off with the Mario Starter Course, these sets will let you recreate famous scenes from the *Super Mario Bros.* series in real life using a wide variety of LEGO.



Beyond the pieces themselves, there will also be a deeper technological level to the LEGO Super Mario sets. Mario himself, for example, will feature LCD screens that animate his eyes, mouth, and belly, allowing him to react to or interact with the playsets. A free LEGO Super Mario smartphone app will be available to enhance the sets as well, offering more advanced building guides and suggesting "other creative ways to build and play."

LEGO Super Mario will launch on August 1, so find out how to get your own Mario Starter Course set on Walmart.com or at your local Walmart store.

Walmart release calendar

MAY

26 MINECRAFT DUNGEONS
MICROSOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH, PC



JUN

5 THE OUTER WORLDS
PRIVATE DIVISION / SWITCH

16 DESPERADOS III
THQ NORDIC / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

19 THE LAST OF US PART II
SONY / PS4

23 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM – REHYDRATED
THQ NORDIC / XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH, PC

JUL

10 F1 2020
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10 SWORD ART ONLINE: ALICIZATION LYCORIS
BANDAI NAMCO / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

17 GHOST OF TSUSHIMA
SONY / PS4

28 DESTROY ALL HUMANS!
THQ NORDIC / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

AUG

28 WASTELAND 3
DEEP SILVER / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

SEP

4 MARVEL'S AVENGERS
SQUARE ENIX / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

17 CYBERPUNK 2077
CD PROJEKT / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC



ESRB ADDS NEW NOTICES FOR IN-GAME PURCHASES



For gamers or parents of gamers wishing they had more information on what a particular title might include before buying it, the ESRB is adding expanded game ratings to help do just that.

The organization has now introduced an additional notice for inclusion under the Interactive Elements category: *In-Game Purchases (Includes Random Items)*. According to the ESRB, this new notice will be for any game that contains the ability to purchase digital goods or premiums with real-world currency, for which the player doesn't know prior to purchase the specific goods or premiums they will receive (including loot boxes, item packs, and more).

The *In-Game Purchases (Includes Random Items)* notice will also cover all games that include purchases with any randomized elements, including loot boxes, gacha games, item or card packs, and more. Games that have the *In-Game Purchases (Includes Random Items)* notice may also include other non-randomized paid elements.

The standard *In-Game Purchases* notice will remain in use for games that offer any other type of purchases, including additional levels, cosmetic items, DLC, and so on.

Thanks to this new notice from the ESRB, you'll now have even more decision-making power when picking up the latest and greatest games from Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

KOJIMA CONTEMPLATES FUTURE FEAR

During a recent interview as part of becoming a BAFTA Fellowship recipient, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Death Stranding* creator Hideo Kojima gave a few hints about what a possible future horror game from him might look like.

"*P.T.* was a mysterious game, created by a mysterious studio, with no previous announcement or information, so it used forbidden techniques to increase fear," Kojima told the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. "It was a one-off thing, so we cannot reuse that method again."

Instead, Kojima insisted that he and his team would have to find other methods of instilling fear in players—but that it might come easy due to a particular weakness that he has.

"I'm easily frightened myself, so I have confidence that I could create something more terrifying than perhaps others could," he explained. "I get frightened of things like darkness and imagine shadows of ghosts in the dark. Just like Hitchcock or Spielberg did."



If you haven't already done so, experience Hideo Kojima's latest work on the PlayStation 4 by picking up your own copy of *Death Stranding* from Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

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3. Keep

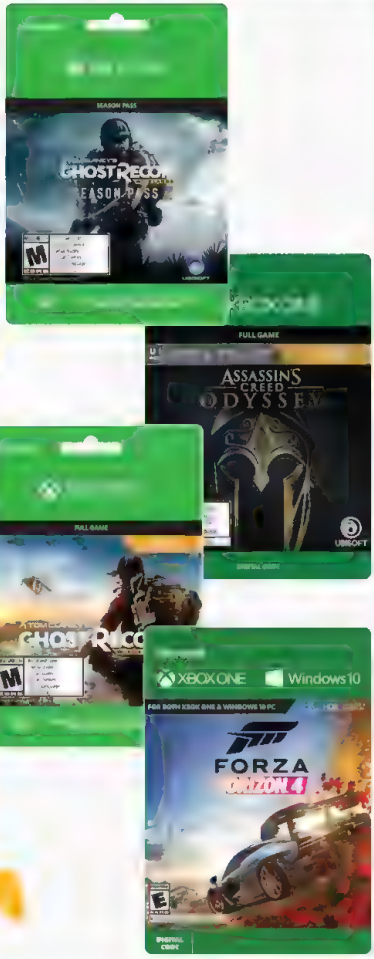
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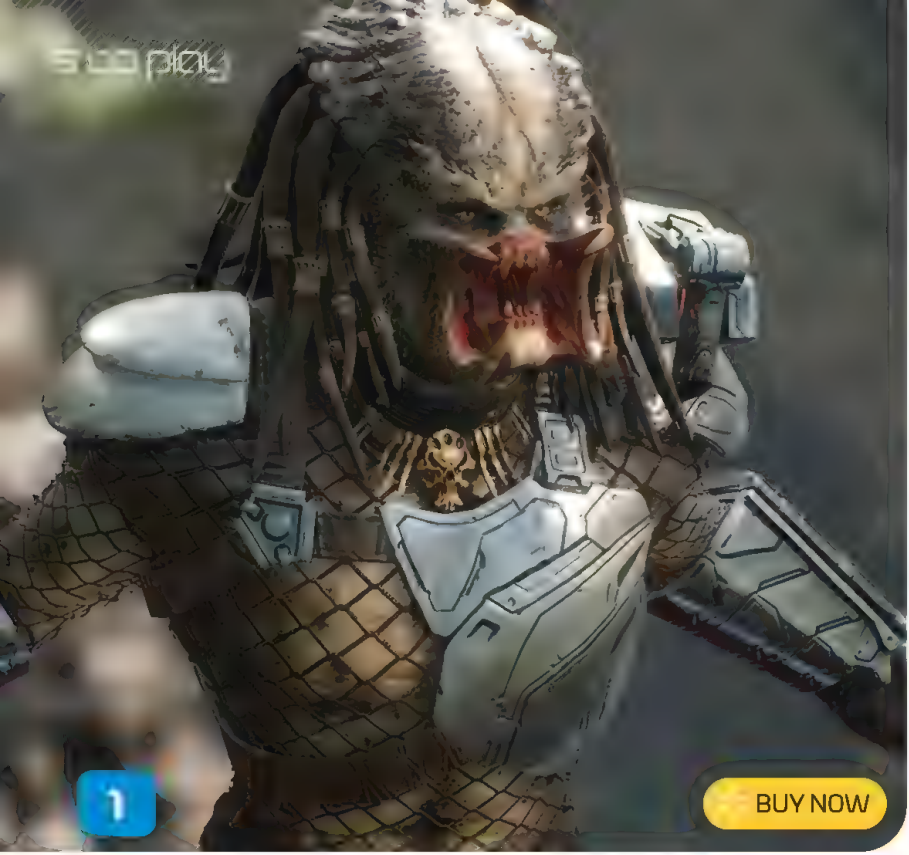
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PREDATOR: HUNTING GROUNDS

PUBLISHER SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT / **DEVELOPER** ILLFONIC / **PLATFORMS** PS4, PC / **RELEASE DATE** 04 24 2020

"*Predator. Hunting Grounds* is an asymmetrical, four-on-one, online multiplayer-only game that pits an elite four-person Fireteam of soldiers against the world's fiercest hunter, The Predator. When playing as The Predator, you play from the third-person point of view, and your objective is to eliminate the Fireteam before they can complete their mission and exfiltrate out of the area. The Predator also has many weapons that are part of this franchise, as well as some new ones. When playing as a member of the Fireteam you play from the first-person point of view, and are given a series of mission objectives to complete in order to exfiltrate the area. [The] Fireteam's mission objectives can change if they engage and neutralize the Predator. We also worked with Fox to continue some of the previously established storylines, and players will collect bits and pieces of the story of the OWLF, Stargazer, and other characters."

TRAMELL RAY ISAAC, VICE PRESIDENT OF ART, ILLFONIC

When playing as **The Predator**, you play from the **third-person** point of view, and your objective is to **eliminate** the Fireteam.

MORTAL KOMBAT 11
AFTERMATH

COMING SOON

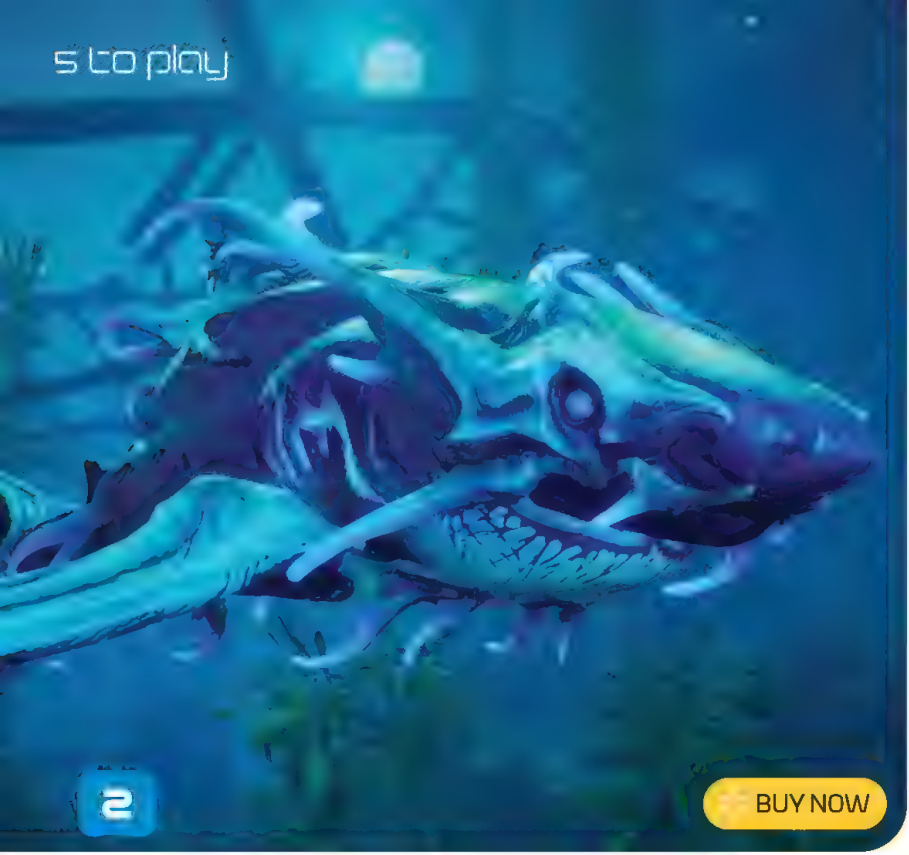


- MORTAL KOMBAT 11 BASE GAME
- KOMBAT PACK
- MORTAL KOMBAT 11: AFTERMATH

MATURE 17+
M
ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language

PS4 NINTENDO SWITCH XBOX ONE



2

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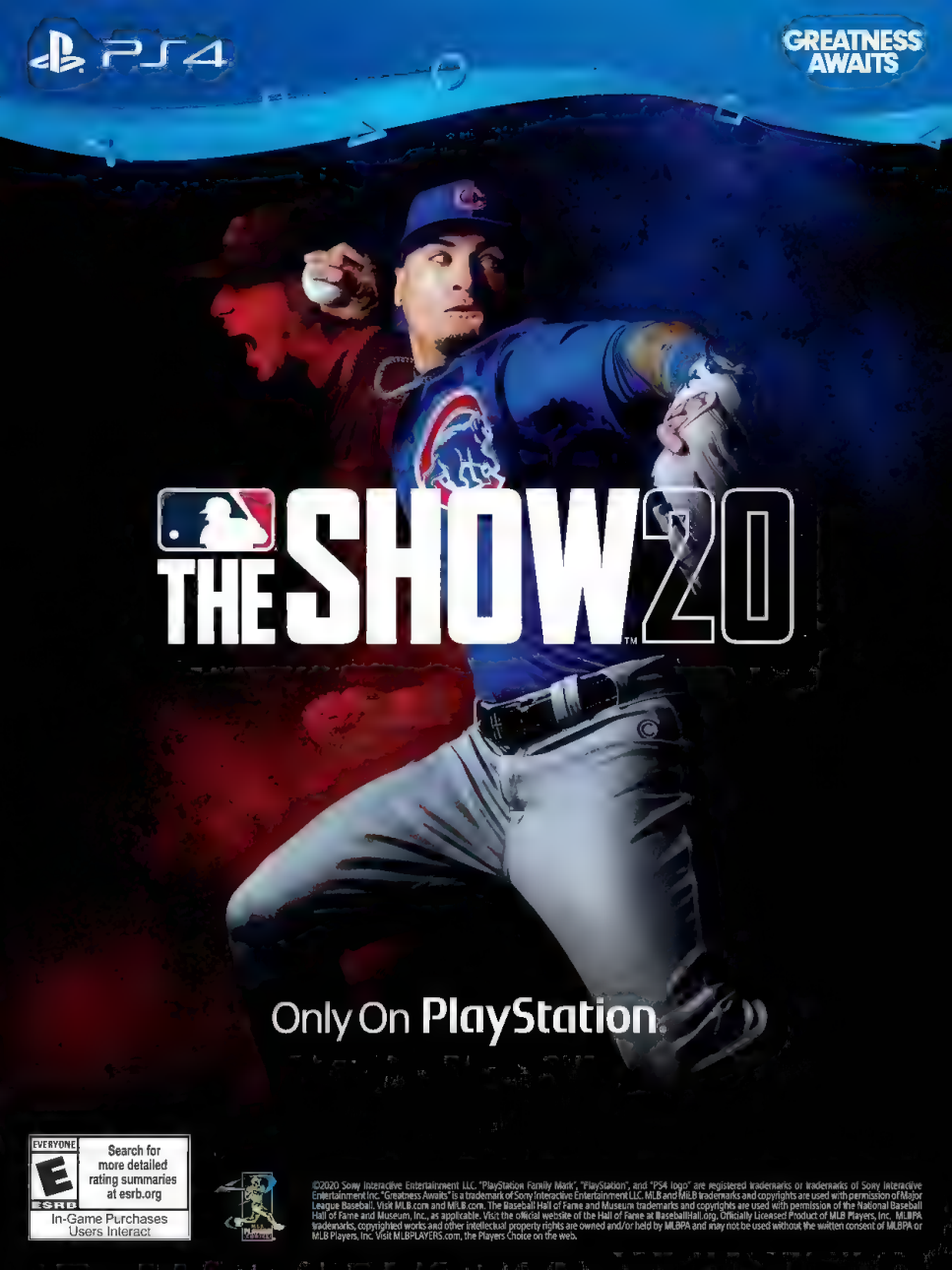
MANEATER

PUBLISHER TRIPWIRE INTERACTIVE, DEEP SILVER / **DEVELOPER** TRIPWIRE INTERACTIVE / **PLATFORMS** XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH, PC / **RELEASE DATE** 05.22.2020 (SWITCH TBA)

"*Maneater* is an open-world action RPG—or, as we like to call it, a shaRkPG—where you play as a baby bull shark torn from its mother's belly. As players eat, explore, and evolve, their shark will grow in size and gain access to all kinds of over-the-top and crazy moves and attacks. Whether that's breaching onto the shore to gobble up some beachgoers, or chomping down on a bounty hunter and then spitting him into the air and using your tail to whip him like a projectile, there's a depth to combat and character evolutions we think players are going to really enjoy sinking their teeth into. And while making sure the shark looks and moves realistically, *Maneater*, like the *Sharknado* movies, embraces a certain sense of absurdity. Though it also, like the movie *Jaws*, seeks to capture that feeling of terror and dread, though from the point-of-view of you, the shark."

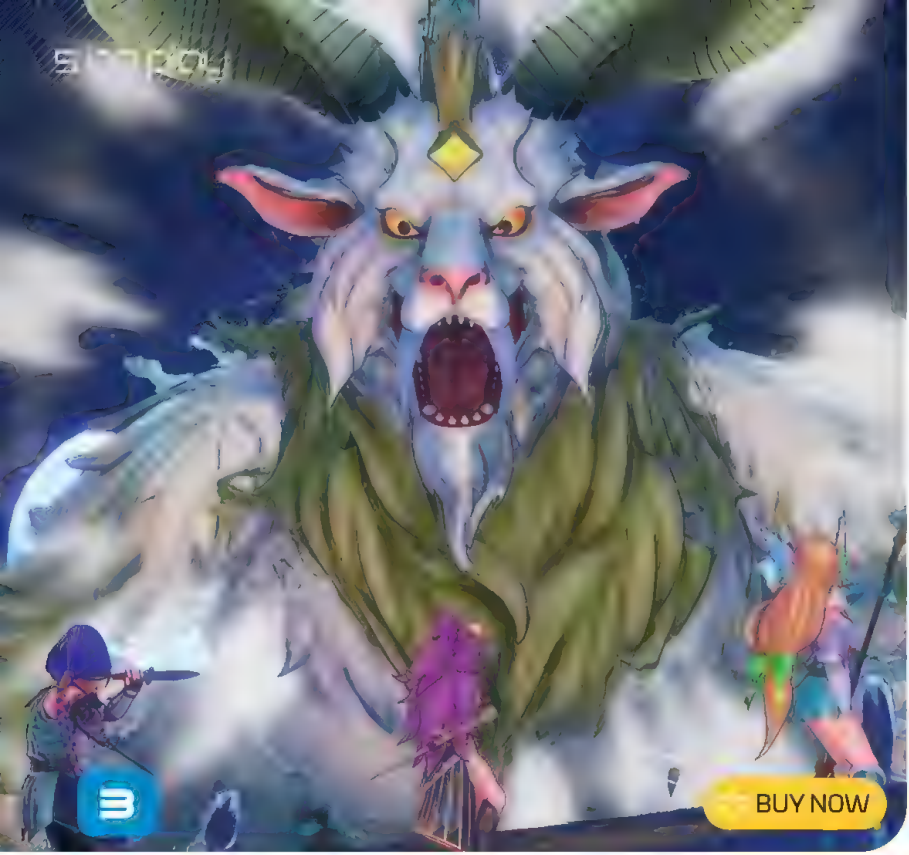
BILL MUNK, GAME DIRECTOR, TRIPWIRE INTERACTIVE

As players **eat, explore**, and **evolve**, their shark will grow in size and gain access to all kinds of over-the-top and **crazy moves** and **attacks**.



EVERYONE
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ESRB
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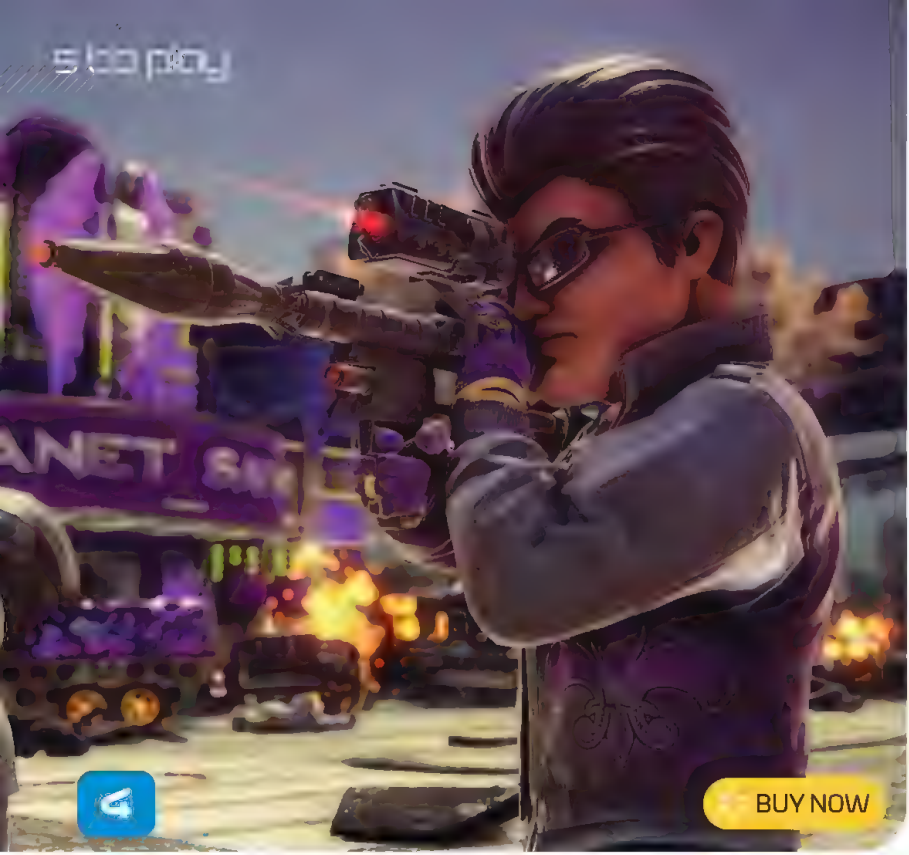
PUBLISHER SQUARE ENIX / **DEVELOPER** SQUARE ENIX / **PLATFORMS** PS4, SWITCH, PC / **RELEASE DATE** 04.24.2020

"*Trials of Mana* is the full remake of *Seiken Densetsu 3*, the original 1995 sequel to *Secret of Mana*, which was previously released in Japan only. We've modernized the graphics, and changed the camera perspective to third person to enhance the sense of immersion. Additionally, we've redone the action elements. While [they] were enjoyable in the original game, when we dropped [those action elements] into the 3D game as-is, we felt a desire to add in more actions. Therefore, we decided to add evasion, aerial attacks, and combo attacks so that the action elements would be even stronger. We've also dug even deeper into the relationships between characters. Like the original, *Trials of Mana*'s biggest draw is its story, which plays out differently depending on which three among the six main characters you select. So we added side conversations where party members will go ahead and start chatting with each other while you're traveling."

SHINICHI TATSUKE, PRODUCER, SQUARE ENIX

We decided to add **evasion, aerial attacks**, and **combo attacks** so that the action elements would be **even stronger**.


NINTENDO SWITCH
Xenoblade Chronicles
Definitive Edition
CONTINUE THE STORY OF SHULK
TEEN
T
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Mild Language
Partial Nudity
Use of Alcohol and Tobacco
Violence
Game and systems sold separately.
Nintendo Switch once plays all games that support handheld mode.
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Nintendo



SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD REMASTERED

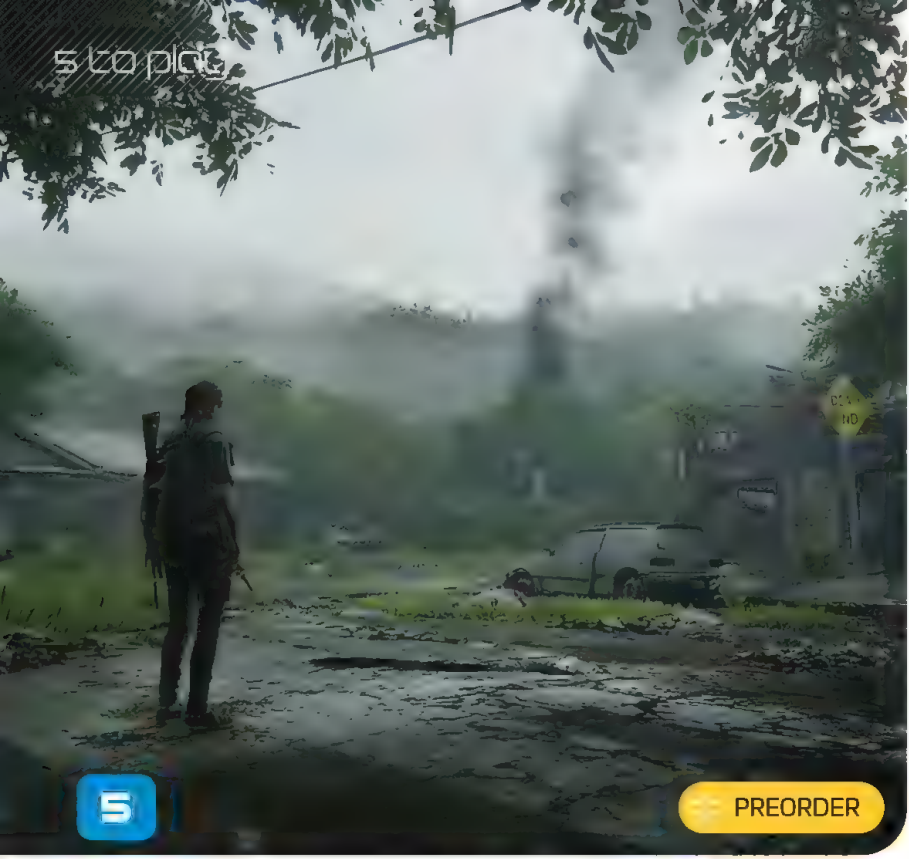
PUBLISHER DEEP SILVER , **DEVELOPER** DEEP SILVER VOLITION SPERASOFT / **PLATFORMS** XBOX ONE PS4, PC / **RELEASE DATE** 05 22 2020

"Considered by many the most popular and successful *Saints Row* game, *Saints Row: The Third Remastered* takes the core building blocks of *Saints Row: The Third* and improves all areas of its visual presentation. The overall world palette, visual fidelity, and character styles were completely [revamped and enhanced] to be more similar to the original marketing assets' quality. Another point players will be happy to notice is that the streets of Steelport are much more busy than before—the number of vehicles and pedestrians was increased, which grants more impactful moments of mayhem as cars crash into each other or explode. In addition, all three expansion packs and more than 30 pieces of DLC from the original version have been remastered and are included in the package, adding hours of additional gameplay. All these enhancements have given a fresh, shiny coat of paint to *Saints Row: The Third*, and we're really proud of what we've achieved."

KATHARINA LIPPACH, LINE PRODUCER, KOCH MEDIA

All three **expansion packs** and more than **30 pieces of DLC** from the original version have been **remastered** and are **included in the package.**


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THE LAST OF US PART II

PUBLISHER SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT / **DEVELOPER** NAUGHTY DOG / **PLATFORMS** PS4 / **RELEASE DATE** 06.19.2020

Set five years after developer Naughty Dog's groundbreaking first attempt at a post-apocalyptic adventure, *The Last of Us Part II* picks back up with Ellie and Joel after they've settled down in Wyoming. There, the duo have temporarily found peace and stability, but it wouldn't be *The Last of Us* if things stayed that way for long. While the game shares similar themes of survival in the remnants of human society with its predecessor, *The Last of Us Part II* explores those ideas with even greater depth. Ellie's ability to adapt to her environment and switch tactics when facing off against foes has been enhanced by Naughty Dog's new animation technology, which makes controlling her both far smoother and more lifelike. Combine that with a new set of side characters, a richer storyline, and a more beautiful yet dangerous world, and *The Last of Us Part II* promises to set a new standard in video games, just as its predecessor did seven years ago.

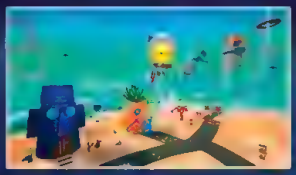
Ellie's ability to adapt to her environment and **switch tactics** when facing off against foes has been **enhanced** by Naughty Dog's new **animation technology.**

nickelodeon

SpongeBob SQUAREPANTS

BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM

Rehydrated









Available June 23, 2020

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ENFANTS et ADULTES 10+
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ESRB

Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief
Violence en animation
Espièglerie

THQ NORDIC · PURPLE LAMP · PS4 · XBOX ONE · NINTENDO SWITCH

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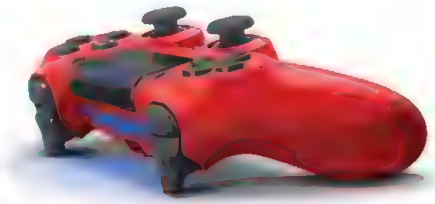


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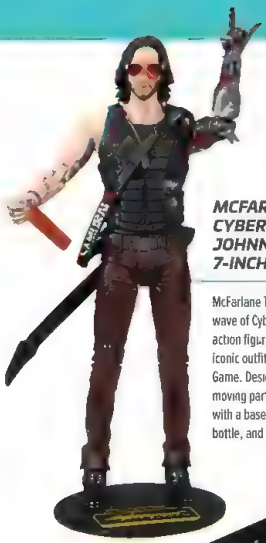




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PREORDER



SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM – REHYDRATED

ARE YA READY?

BY JOSH HARMON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
THQ NORDIC

DEVELOPER
PURPLE LAMP STUDIOS

PLATFORMS
XBOX ONE, PS4 SWITCH

RELEASE DATE
06.23.2020

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea? If you're anywhere between the ages of 10 and 30, the odds are good that you just shouted out the answer (even if only in your head). Since his show debuted on Nickelodeon in 1999, SpongeBob SquarePants, the energetic fry cook who calls Bikini Bottom home, has become a veritable cultural phenomenon. And while the perennially cheery poriferan has starred in plenty of video games, there's perhaps no more beloved adaptation than *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom*, a 3D platformer THQ originally released way back in 2003.

Now, THQ Nordic and Purple Lamp Studios are bringing the adventure back on Xbox One, PlayStation 4, and Nintendo Switch with *SpongeBob SquarePants. Battle for Bikini Bottom - Rehydrated*. Anyone who played the original will be able to revisit it, and anyone who didn't will be able to discover what the fuss is about.

The original *Battle for Bikini Bottom* released in an age when licensed tie-in games were still mostly cheap, simplistic cash-ins, and they often didn't bother to understand what was so special about their source material. But the *SpongeBob* game stood out because it went against both those trends.

"One reason it became a cult classic is of course because it features tons of characters from the TV series and a lot of the irreverent *SpongeBob* humor that kids and adults love," said Martin Kreuch, producer at THQ Nordic. "Another reason is the wide variety of gameplay and locations. Every iconic location has multiple segments, a unique vibe, special puzzles, and individual story plots.



NO, THIS IS PATRICK

As in the original, the single-player story of *Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated* includes three distinct playable characters, whom you can swap between at set points throughout levels. Each character has his or her own abilities that can help tackle platforming challenges, take on enemies, and discover secret collectibles. The remake also introduces some tweaks and improvements to each character. "Our goal was to integrate our changes so subtly that even fans of the original would not notice the changes right away," explained THQ Nordic producer Martin Kreuch.

Here's a quick guide to what sets the trio of heroes

SPONGEBOB



SpongeBob has access to a few special abilities that his friends don't. For one, he can use his underpants to bungee jump off set points in some levels, to help pick up whatever might be hidden below. True to the cartoon, he also has access to a few bubble-based abilities, like the Cruise Bubble, which launches out a controllable torpedo made of—you guessed it—bubbles.

PATRICK STAR



Anyone who's seen the show knows that SpongeBob's starfish bestie is something of a big lug, and *Battle for Bikini Bottom*'s version of Patrick is no different. He's strong enough to pick up and throw objects and smaller enemies, and he can even chuck ice cubes to freeze nearby water, allowing you to walk across. In a *Rehydrated* upgrade, he can now strafe while throwing objects, which should make him a little easier to control.

SANDY CHEEKS



Kreuch describes the adventurous Sandy as the game's "most dynamic character," and it's easy to see why. With karate-based attacks and a lasso that lets her glide and swing over gaps, she's a veritable action hero, if action heroes were squirrels that explored the bottom of the ocean in dive suits. *Rehydrated* improves on her gameplay by letting her use her lasso even while mid-leap.

> "One reason it became a **cult classic** is of course because it features **tons of characters** from the **TV series**."
>
> **MARTIN KREUCH, PRODUCER AT THQ NORDIC**

The game packs in something for every player."

Rehydrated isn't just a typical rerelease or remaster, either. The developers actually remade the entire game from the ground up in Unreal Engine 4, allowing them to bring back the same classic levels and characters with detail-rich graphics that are impressive by today's standards. At the same time, however, they also took great lengths to replicate the gameplay of the original—give or take a few quality-of-life improvements like a more modern camera. "Basically, we tried to remake it according to how the fans remember it, and how we remember

"It's as if **you** the player are able to **live out** some of the **best episodes** of SpongeBob."

MARTIN KREUCH, PRODUCER AT THQ NORDIC

it, rather than simply replicating it," Kreuch explained. As far as remakes go, *Rehydrated* is less *Resident Evil 2* and *Final Fantasy VII*, and more like the recent *Crash Bandicoot* and *Spyro the Dragon* collections.

Kreuch thinks the improved visuals, especially the modern animations, will make a real difference for players. "Now you feel even more like you are actually running around Bikini Bottom or the Kelp Forest, and it's as if you the player are able to live out some of the best episodes of *SpongeBob*," he said.

The concept of episodes is probably a good way to think about *Battle for Bikini Bottom* if you've never played it. The game does have an overarching plot—the evil Plankton loses control of an army of robots, and it's up to SpongeBob and his friends to stop them—but the individual levels also tell focused side-stories of their own. "For example, in the Mermalair level it's all about helping Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy defeat the evil Prawn," Kreuch said. "In Jellyfish Fields, you're out to get some soothing jelly from King Jellyfish to treat Squidward's jellyfish sting wounds."

Across these adventures, you'll do battle against robots, solve puzzles,



Bikini Bottom looks great. So do SpongeBob's abilities, like the Bubble Bash seen here.





F IS FOR FRIENDS WHO DO STUFF TOGETHER

In addition to the remade single-player campaign, *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated* also introduces a totally new mode: two-player cooperative multiplayer. Since the original game's levels were designed around solo play, the team chose to make multiplayer a standalone feature. The basic concept is a riff on *Gears of War*'s Horde mode (though a much more family-friendly version).

"You battle all the robots from the main game, wave after wave, across more than 20 islands," explained Martin Kreuch, a producer on the game with THQ Nordic. With support for both couch co-op and online play, you'll be able to strategize and brawl your way to survival with friends near or far.

Better still, multiplayer brings the roster of playable characters up to seven, adding Mr. Krabs, Gary, Squidward, and Robo-Plankton to the mix. "They all have their own movesets and attacks, straight out of the TV series," Kreuch said. "For example, Mr. Krabs fights with the swordfish skull from the episode 'One Krabs Trash.'"

and conquer platforming challenges. And in the vein of classic 3D platformers, you'll also be collecting—a lot. SpongeBob can collect 100 Golden Spatulas (think *Super Mario 64*'s Stars or *Odyssey*'s Moons), dozens of lost socks, and thousands upon thousands of shiny objects that are imaginatively named "Shiny Objects." If romping around colorful levels and hoovering up everything in sight is your thing, *Rehydrated* will certainly scratch that itch.

Of course, humor is also integral to *SpongeBob*'s enduring popularity. Since *Battle for Bikini Bottom* released not long after the cartoon premiered, it only had a limited pool of jokes and stories from the show to reference. Almost 17 years later, the team is able to refer to a much deeper canon. "When updating the game, we tried to bring out all the wonderful little details that were already part of the original game, while at the same time adding little nods to the seasons that were aired after its release," Kreuch said.

Working on *Rehydrated* also allowed Purple Lamp to add in content that had been planned for 2003's *Battle for Bikini Bottom* but ultimately left on the cutting room floor. In the original, you could unlock a piece of concept art showing a fight against a Robo-Squidward boss, and unused files that sleuthing fans discovered on the disc pointed to an entire level based in Patrick's dream, which,



A Robo-Squidward boss cut from the original game makes a comeback in *Rehydrated*'s co-op mode

SPEEDRUN SQUAREPANTS

Since *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated* was rebuilt from the ground up, the team needed to make sure the game felt close to the original. To help in that goal, Purple Lamp Studios actually arranged a visit from the current world record holder for speedrunning the original game, a player who goes by SHIFT.

"SHIFT knows the original game inside and out," said THQ Nordic producer Martin Kreuch. "He pointed the team to a lot of little details, shortcuts, and gameplay design choices that are hard to spot, even for a game developer. He visited the development studio and played the full game, as far as it was done by the time, together with the team."

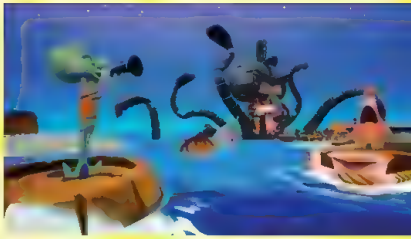
While SHIFT may very well be the world's foremost expert on *Battle for Bikini Bottom*, he wasn't the only fan that the team at Purple Lamp turned to for ideas. "We've looked through the discussions fans had on various forums and tried to adjust our vision to incorporate their expectations," Kreuch said. In fact, the game's achievements (or trophies) were directly inspired by an imagined list posted to a community wiki. "The team liked [it] so much that we got in touch with them and the authors kindly allowed us to use what they came up with in the actual game," Kreuch said.

understandably, contained a whole lot of ice cream.

"Since we didn't want to alter the actual single-player campaign and risk the new content feeling disjointed, we opted for integrating it all into the new multiplayer," Kreuch said. (For more on multiplayer, see the sidebar "F Is for Friends Who Do Stuff Together.") "Robo-Squidward will appear throughout the multiplayer mode and later on also attack the players. And several islands of the multiplayer are designed [to be] reminiscent of the Patrick's Dream level fragment. Another little fan service we added is that we made the SpongeBall Arena that was present as a video in the original game during the credits fully playable."

Much like its absorbent and yellow and porous star, *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated* seems eager to please, offering both a respectful and polished take on a cult classic and a generous helping of new stuff. The parallel probably isn't a coincidence, either. Kreuch, like many of the developers who worked on the remake, has been a fan of *SpongeBob* from the show's earliest days. He and the rest of the team see *Rehydrated* not just as a chance to bring the game back for a modern audience, but also to continue the philosophy of series creator Stephen Hillenburg, who passed away in 2018. "His core message that hope, love, imagination, and friendship can help you overcome any obstacle is timeless, as is the wacky brand of humor he helped create," he said.

"Underwater," as Kreuch pointed out, "the glass is always half full."

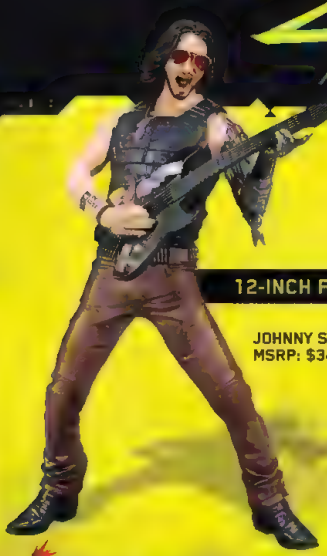


The new multiplayer content adds four new playable characters to the game, each with their own special abilities.



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THE LAST OF US PART II

WOMAN ON A MISSION

BY JOSH HARMON

PUBLISHER
SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER
NAUGHTY DOG
PLATFORMS
PS4
RELEASE DATE
06.19.2020

With *The Last of Us*, Naughty Dog cemented itself as one of the most ambitious studios in all of gaming. The 2014 PlayStation exclusive saw the company that gave us Crash Bandicoot and Nathan Drake flexing its prowess to explore a new genre—survival horror—and a darker tone.

But what made *The Last of Us* a modern classic was restraint. Its story of an older man, Joel, and a teenage girl, Ellie, traveling across a country brought to collapse by a zombie-spawning fungal infection, ultimately wasn't about saving the world, but the human relationship between its two central characters. Combat wasn't about the wealth of weapons at your disposal or hordes of enemies. It was about small, tense encounters where every threat mattered and every shot you took had to count.



At the start of the game, Ellie has found peace in Jackson with Joel and her new love interest, Dina.



The story picks up with **Ellie**, now 19, living in relative safety in Jackson, Wyoming, before a **terrible tragedy** forces her to embark on a cross-country **quest for revenge.**

The Last of Us Part II, then, can't follow the standard video-game-sequel approach of bigger and more bombastic, else it loses the fundamental heart of the budding series. Instead, Naughty Dog needs to find a way to make those same elements feel just as impactful the second time around. Thankfully, the studio appears to be on the right track.

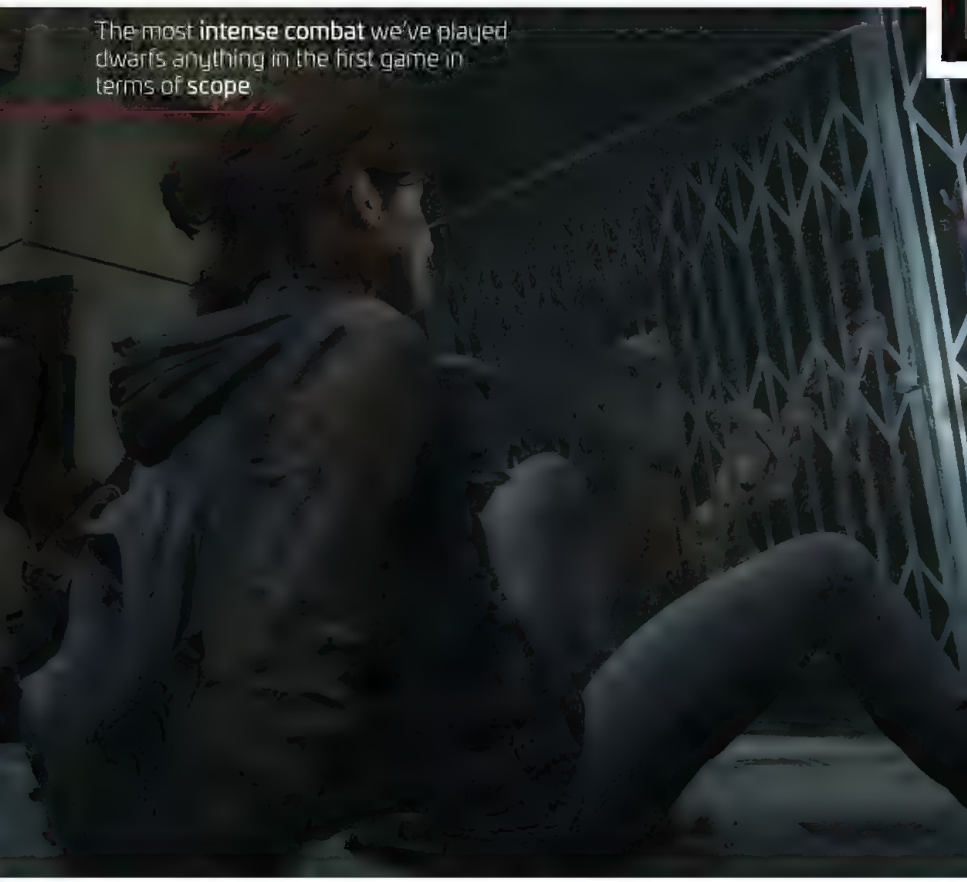
Despite being so close to launch, Naughty Dog is playing its cards close to its chest with the narrative. We know that the story picks up with Ellie, now 19, living in relative safety in Jackson, Wyoming. The main focus of the story will be a cross-country quest for revenge, after a group of outsiders come to Jackson and inflict a terrible tragedy on Ellie and her adopted family. The first game certainly wasn't sunshine and roses by any means, but the sequel seems even grittier and more

intense: Head writer and co-director Neil Druckmann has said that the focus of *The Last of Us* was love, but the focus of *Part II* is hatred.

But the story's mysteries far outweigh what's already been confirmed. What role will Joel play in all this? Where will Ellie go on her quest, outside of the few confirmed locations like Washington State? And how will the characters we've seen in some of the trailers, like the woman we saw fighting off attackers in the rain, factor into the story? That last point is particularly curious Naughty Dog games have never jumped away for cutscenes unconnected to gameplay If that approach continues here, that may mean an entirely unrevealed facet to the story We're intrigued.

By comparison, we know much more about *The Last of Us Part II*'s gameplay Many of the basics remain the same, with lots of downtime between fights for exploration and light puzzle solving But the most

■ Who's the mysterious, still unnamed woman from one of the game's earlier trailers? We have our theories.







CREATURE FEATURES

The Last of Us Part II's remarkably lifelike animation isn't limited to human characters. To help ensure the world feels fleshed out, the team also used motion capture technology to record the movements of a variety of animals, bringing them into the studio for special recording sessions.

Of all these animals, dogs appear to be the most frequent inclusion with the biggest effect on gameplay—the tactical canines are a new enemy type that can sniff you out during combat. The team also mocapped horses, which Ellie rides at multiple points throughout the story. Lastly, Naughty Dog apparently brought a pig into the motion capture studio, though it's not clear if or how the critter will appear in the final game. (We keep tweeting at writer and director Neil Druckmann to give Ellie a talking pig sidekick named Hammy, but that seems like a longshot.)



intense combat we've played dwarfs anything in the first game in terms of scope, and enemy AI has gotten a serious upgrade. There's also at least one new infected type, the Shambler, which spits out acid when you get too close and explodes on death, forcing you to stay on the run.

The wait for *The Last of Us Part II* has been a long one, but it's finally almost over. From what we've played, fans have every reason to be hopeful that Naughty Dog will once again deliver a thrilling capstone to a entire console generation. And in a world as bleak as Ellie's, hope counts for a lot. G

PREORDER



DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

CRYPTO WORTH INVESTING IN

BY MICHAEL SOROFF

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
THQ NORDIC

DEVELOPER
BLACK FOREST GAMES

PLATFORMS
XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

RELEASE DATE
07.28.2020

We're experiencing a golden age of remakes, with games like *Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy*, *Spyro Reignited Trilogy*, *Resident Evil 2* and *3*, and *Final Fantasy VII Remake* all pleasing fans of the originals and introducing new players to these classic titles. Now, a long-dormant series is looking to make a major comeback with Black Forest Games' remake of the cult classic *Destroy All Humans!*

If you're unfamiliar with the original, *Destroy All Humans!* follows the exploits of Cryptosporidium-137 (Crypto-137 to his friends), an alien who travels to Earth in the 1950s to harvest human brain stems to propagate his species. Unlike most games about alien invasions, you won't be playing as the humans attempting to stop them, but as the alien invader himself.

One of the reasons that fans of the series have been clamoring for a remake is its main character. Crypto-137 is a hilariously evil alien, and his relationship with his boss, Orthopox, creates what is "essentially a buddy comedy," said producer Martin Kreuch.

"The fun in playing Crypto really comes from the banter with Pox, who tries to keep Crypto from leveling entire cities with his flying saucer just long enough to gather some intel on the humans," Kreuch said. "Crypto-137 is also a refreshingly

"The fun in playing Crypto really comes from the banter with Pox, who tries to keep Crypto from leveling entire cities."

MARTIN KREUCH, PRODUCER



Destroy All Humans! is packed with tropes from classic alien movies, so expect to see (and mess with) plenty of cows.

THE LOST MISSION OF AREA 42

One of the opportunities that Black Forest Games had in remaking *Destroy All Humans!* was sifting through the archives and materials that were left on the proverbial cutting room floor. Lo and behold, the studio found something really interesting.

"We discovered a lot of unused voice files when rummaging through the archives of the original game," Kreuch said, "and along with them an almost complete set of voice files for a mission that was scrapped in the original development."

Along with the voice files, the developer also found notes on how that mission, known as the "Lost Mission of Area 42," was meant to fit into the story. So Black Forest Games took it a step further and built the mission for the game.

"We're already excited to see the reactions from the fans when we can finally put this labor of love into their eagerly waiting hands," Kreuch said.

"Apart from the overall push in **visual quality**, I think the **animations** of the game are a key aspect to why it is now even **funnier** than back in the day."

MARTIN KREUCH, PRODUCER



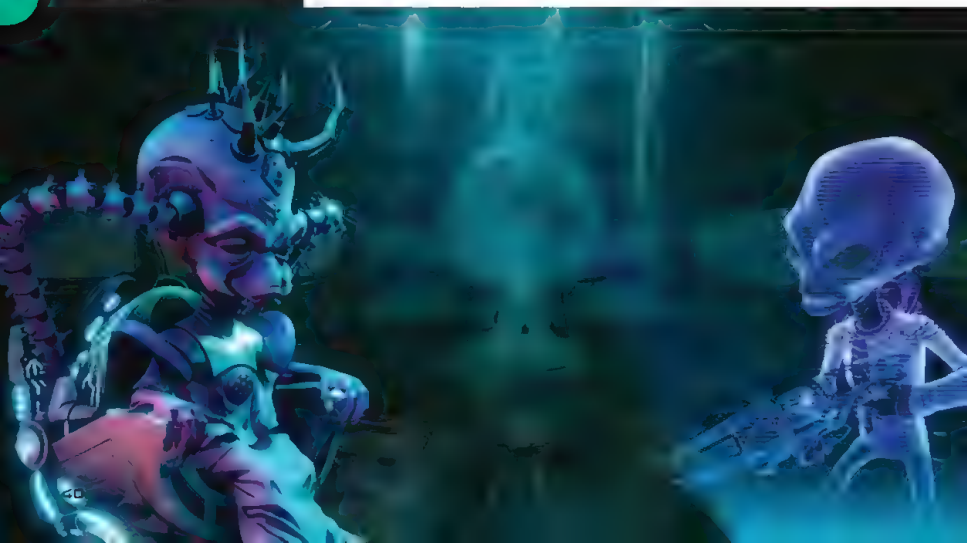
unapologetic character not a grumpy antihero with a heart of gold, just a straightforward evil alien who hates humankind and wants to annihilate or subdue us all."

The original game came out 15 years ago, so a simple HD remaster wouldn't have cut it. That's why Black Forest Games rebuilt the entire game from scratch in Unreal Engine 4, and that has benefited not only the gameplay but the story as well.

"Apart from the overall push in visual quality, I think the animations of the game are a key aspect to why it is now even funnier than back in the day," Kreuch said. "The motion-captured facial animations allowed us to really bring out the nuances of the [witty] dialogues and the same goes for the gameplay."

Speaking of gameplay, Black Forest Games has updated *Destroy All Humans!* in key ways, especially with quality-of-life features like save systems and the ability to replay your favorite missions, while also retaining the "broad design strokes of the original," Kreuch said. The remake is looking to take the core aspects of the original's gameplay and modernize them by giving players more freedom.

"One of the bigger changes is the new Psychokinesis system, which allows you to carry objects, humans, explosives, or whatever else you want to throw at someone, around with you without limiting your ability to shoot or use your jetpack," Kreuch said. "This leads to much more dynamic combat in general but also gave us the opportunity to add even more little gameplay opportunities." G



If you think Crypto looks intimidating, wait until you get a load of his boss, Orthopox.

DESPERADOS III



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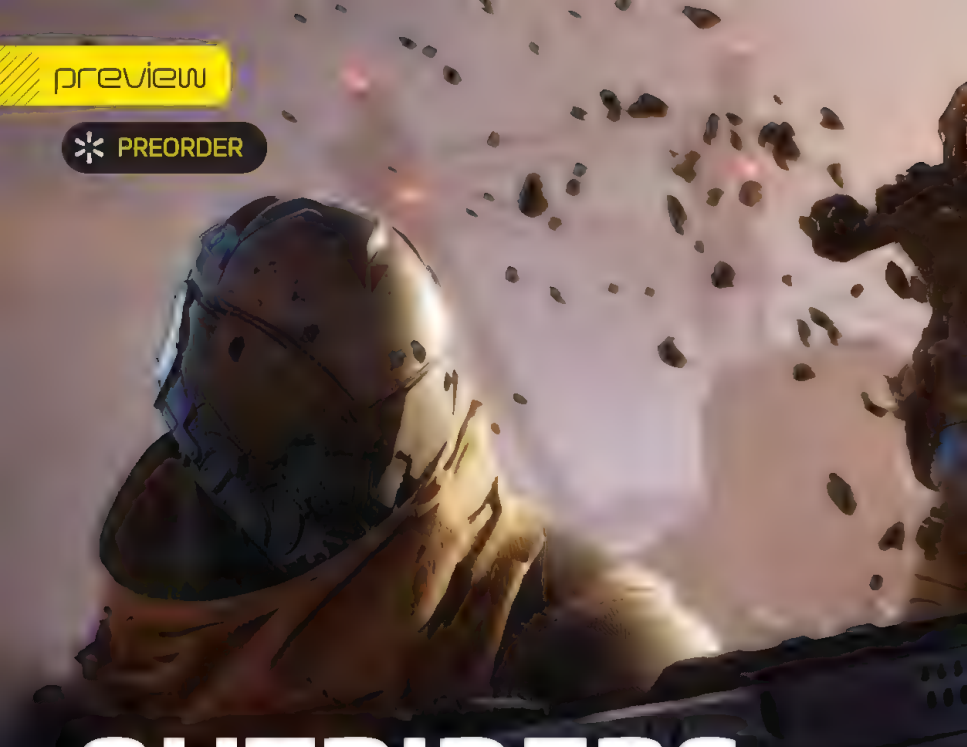
M

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Sang
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PREORDER



OUTRIDERS

THE NEXT GENERATION OF LOOTER-SHOOTERS

BY MICHAEL GOROFF

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
SQUARE ENIX

DEVELOPER
PEOPLE CAN FLY

PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X, PS5, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

RELEASE DATE
Q4 2020

RPG and shooter mash-ups have basically taken over ever since *Borderlands* and *Destiny* first got their hooks into players. Nowadays, it seems like every major publisher has at least one, if not several, "looter shooters" in its repertoire. Square Enix, best known for *Final Fantasy* and *Kingdom Hearts*, is finally throwing its hat into the RPG shooter ring with *Outriders*—and it's shaping up to be one of the best entries in the genre.

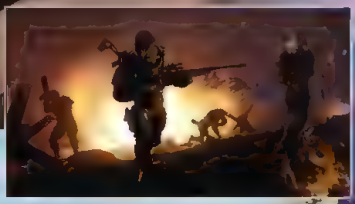
The game's set in a sci-fi universe in which colonists called Outriders arrive on an alien planet called Enoch to find a new home for humanity, only to encounter a mysterious atmospheric event known as the Anomaly that wipes out most of them. Lucky for you, your Outrider survives the disaster, goes into cryo sleep, and wakes up to find that the new world's gone down the drain. There's a civil war brewing on Enoch, and your Outrider quickly takes up the fight, with new Anomaly-caused superpowers to turn the tides.

One of the aspects of *Outriders* that should entice fans of the genre is the team that's making it. *Bulletstorm* developer People Can Fly has built *Outriders* from the ground up, leveraging the studio's years of shooter experience.

"What truly sets *Outriders* apart from other games is our commitment to deliver a deep RPG and a great shooter," said creative director

"What truly sets ***Outriders*** apart from other games is our commitment to deliver a **deep RPG** and a **great shooter**."

BARTEK KMITA, CREATIVE DIRECTOR



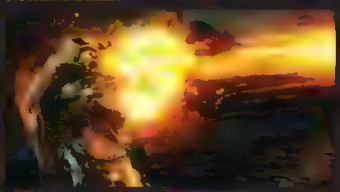


Before the Anomaly, Enoch actually looked like a pretty charming place to call home.

CLASS ACT

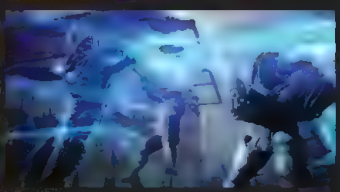
Outriders' three known classes—Pyromancer, Devastator, and Trickster—all have incredibly different, and incredibly fun, souped-up special abilities. Here's what we know about each one so far.

PYROMANCER



The Pyromancer is a great class for advanced players. Using mid-range area-of-effect attacks, the Pyromancer can flush out enemies with fiery techniques and regain health whenever they down a foe.

TRICKSTER



The Trickster is the class for players who love to be sneaky. The Trickster can teleport across the battlefield in order to flank enemies and then make them vulnerable by dropping a bubble shield that slows down any enemies (or projectiles) that enter it.

DEVASTATOR



If you love getting in your enemy's face, the Devastator is the class for you. Not only can you perform a high-flying smash attack that will down any enemies caught in its blast radius, but you can also protect yourself in a rocky overshield that lets you close the gap against snipers.





"We knew from the start that we didn't want to rely on '**the holy trinity**' in terms of classes: **tank, damage** and **healer**."

BARTEK KMITA, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Bartek Kmita "With *Outriders*, we are making the game we always wanted to play."

What Kmita described as "the DNA of People Can Fly as a studio" is apparent in every aspect of *Outriders*. The weapons are punchy, the movement is fluid (especially for a third person game), and the powers feel, well, powerful.

Like other RPG shooters, *Outriders* offers four different character classes for players to choose from and build their ideal character. So far People Can Fly has revealed three of those classes—the crowd-controlling Pyromancer, the heavy-hitting Devastator, and the ninja-like Trickster—and each has a distinct playstyle thanks to their special abilities.

Thankfully, People Can Fly didn't rely on copying the norms of the genre to create *Outriders*' character classes "We knew from the start that we didn't want to rely on 'the holy trinity' in terms of classes tank, damage and healer," Kmita said. "We set out to create classes that provided different gameplay experiences within the context of a fast-paced and hard-hitting third-person shooter."

Like most looter shooters, *Outriders* is both a single-player and co-op experience. Players can drop in and out of co-op sessions at any time and will retain any progress they make. But the difference in *Outriders* is how integral the story is

"We have placed a heavy emphasis on telling a strong, character-driven, dark sci-fi story in *Outriders*," Kmita said. "There's a lot of story content in this game, both in the main storyline, and in the sidequests as well."


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GHOST OF TSUSHIMA

GHOST IN THE ISLE

BY MOLLIE L PATTERSON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

DEVELOPER
SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS

PLATFORMS
PS4

RELEASE DATE
07.17.2020

In the early days of the PlayStation 4, one of the standout releases that helped showcase the power of Sony's new platform was unquestionably *Infamous Second Son*. Developer Sucker Punch Productions' tale of a young graffiti artist and his supernatural powers made for a larger-than-life adventure filled with gameplay and graphics that only a next-generation system could provide.

Now, as the PlayStation 4 moves into its final years, Sucker Punch is back to remind us all just how much life the console still has left. And it's doing so through a game that couldn't be more different either stylistically or thematically.

Far from *Second Son*'s fantastical abilities and modern-day setting, *Ghost of Tsushima* instead tells a more grounded tale from feudal Japan. Set on Tsushima Island in the year 1274, players step into the role of Jin Sakai, a warrior trying to protect his home during the first Mongol invasion of Japan. Trained by his uncle, the lord of Tsushima, Jin has learned the ways of the samurai since he was a child. Now, however, he is forced to throw away his code of honor in order to defeat an enemy who has no qualms about being ruthless at every opportunity

Thankfully Jin won't be alone as he fights to free his home from its foreign invaders. One ally he'll meet along the way is Masako, a female samurai whose plans for victory might not always match up with Jin's. Even when he has to go it solo, however, Jin will be his own one-man army Between his history as a samurai and his new life as a "ghost," players will have a wide arsenal of weapons and skills to use against foes. While there promises to be plenty of more intense, action-heavy moments, the team is building *Ghost of Tsushima* to also offer more strategic, defensive battles, where one swing of a sword can mean the difference between victory and defeat. Sometimes Jin will even take the less direct approach to defeating his enemy, finding moments when stealth is the best course of action.





Players step into the role of **Jin Sakai**, a warrior trying to **protect his home** during the first Mongol **invasion of Japan.**

ROAMING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Infamous Second Son's version of Seattle was a playground for both protagonist Delsin Rowe and the players controlling him, offering an open world full of opportunities for unleashing a variety of superpowers.

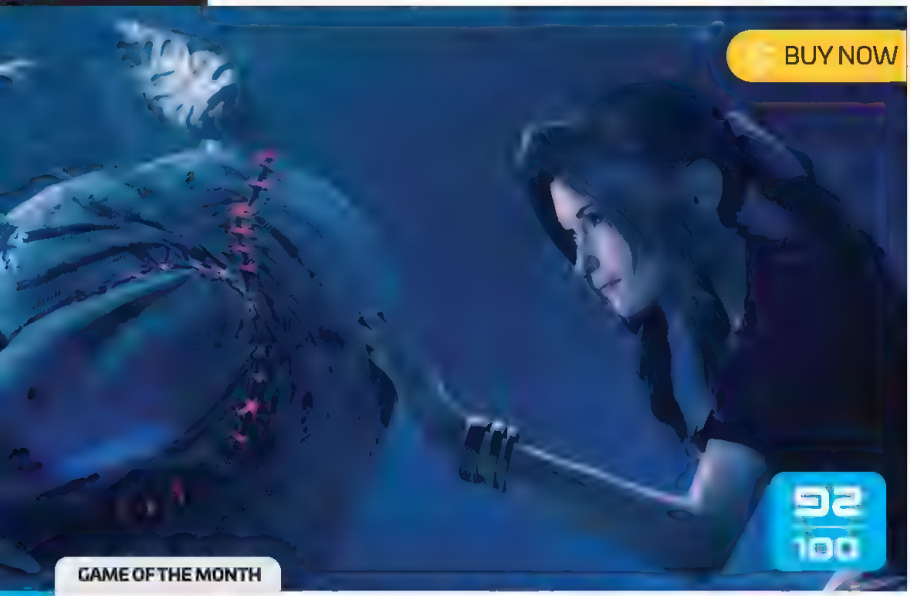
For a more grounded and realistic game like *Ghost of Tsushima*, on the other hand, you might initially expect to find a more focused and linear recreation of Japan. But developer Sucker Punch decided that wouldn't suit the experience it wanted to create. The team sees the sort of virtual sandbox offered by *Second Son* as integral to modern gaming, and wanted to continue to offer players the greater feelings of power and authority that open worlds allow.

Because of this, *Ghost of Tsushima*'s version of the Japanese isle of Tsushima will be a sprawling land filled with a wide variety of locations to travel to, towns to visit, and people to meet. And, no matter where you go, the team has worked hard to craft a slice of historical Japan that'll be as beautiful to look at as it is exciting to explore.

From its big, epic battles, to its more intense one-on-one duels, to its stealthier moments, *Ghost of Tsushima* will be a visual and aural treat the entire way through, seeming almost like an experience you'd expect for the upcoming next generation of consoles. Instead, *Ghost of Tsushima* is the result of a studio working hard to make use of everything learned over the life of the PS4—and we can't think of a better game to help cap off that long legacy of greatness.



As last looks go, you could do worse.



GAME OF THE MONTH

FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE

ON CLOUD SEVEN

BY MOLLIE L PATTERSON

PUBLISHER
SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER
SQUARE ENIX
PLATFORMS
PS4
RELEASE DATE
04 10 2020

In 1997, developer Square released the seventh major chapter of its *Final Fantasy* saga on the original PlayStation. It would go on to have more of an impact on the RPG genre, and on gaming as a whole, than even its creators could likely have predicted.

Now, after the better part of a decade in development, *Final Fantasy VII Remake* attempts to bring that groundbreaking game into the modern era, and what a job it does. Right from its opening moments, the amount of work and care that has gone into this game is absolutely obvious. The dark and dingy slums of the city of Midgar now come to life like never before, showcasing a stunning level of detail and color everywhere you look.

Perhaps even more impressive are the transformations to the cast, as those old blocky, squat characters now bear far greater resemblance to living, breathing people. In fact, no one has benefitted more in *Final Fantasy VII Remake* than hero Cloud Strife himself, who is markedly more likable and relatable than ever before. Cloud helps lead a story that's relatively faithful to the original game but also unafraid to tread new ground, and the result is something that we think is more exciting than if





No one has **benefitted** more in *Final Fantasy VII Remake* than hero **Cloud Strife** himself, who is markedly more **likable** and **relatable** than ever before.

Final Fantasy VII Remake feels both modern and retro at the same time, and it's a great balance.

we'd just gotten a point-by-point retelling. Some die-hard fans, however, might not appreciate those changes.

One element of *Final Fantasy VII Remake* that everyone will hopefully like is the new combat system, which gives players direct control over characters like Cloud, Tifa, and Barret. The mixture of more fast-paced regular attacks performed through direct button presses and the battle menu, which pauses the action for more thoughtful decisions on which ability or spell to use, results in a hybrid-style combat system that works wonderfully. Every now and then, a particular set of enemies or a certain situation may make players feel overwhelmed, but for the most part combat is exciting and eventful.

Really, there's only one part of *Final Fantasy VII Remake* that we walked away disappointed in: the overreliance at times on secondary objectives. There are now a lot more sidequests or other less-important tasks to take care of between important story beats, and while they don't hurt the overall experience, we did sometimes find ourselves wishing we could move on to the next big reveal already.

Still, *Final Fantasy VII Remake* is an incredibly impressive reworking of one of the world's most beloved RPGs. It's taken a long time to finally get to this point, but this fantasy was definitely worth the wait.





1 ON 1

PETER FABIANO

PRODUCER RESIDENT EVIL 3

With last year's *Resident Evil 2* remake, Capcom once again redefined a genre it had itself created with a new twist on survival horror that excited and terrified fans around the globe. Even more shocking than that game's terrors was that the company would be back just a year later with an equally impressive retelling of the next chapter in the series, *Resident Evil 3*. To get the inside scoop on Jill's return to the mean streets of Raccoon City, we barred ourselves in a safe room with producer Peter Fabiano to pick his brains before the zombies could come for them.

WGC: After the huge success of the *Resident Evil 2* remake, can you tell us a bit about the effort that's now been put into bringing *Resident Evil 3* back for a new generation?
Peter Fabiano: We certainly did our best to deliver a high-quality experience on par with last year's reimagining of *Resident Evil 2*. You can expect quality graphics and intense feelings of suspense thanks to the use of RE Engine and an over-the-shoulder camera. We wanted to modernize while maintaining the essence of the original game, and were fortunate enough to have some of the staff who worked on the original *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*—including director Kiyohiko Sakata—to help make this a reality.

You can expect **quality graphics** and intense feelings of **suspense** thanks to the use of **RE Engine** and an over-the-shoulder camera.

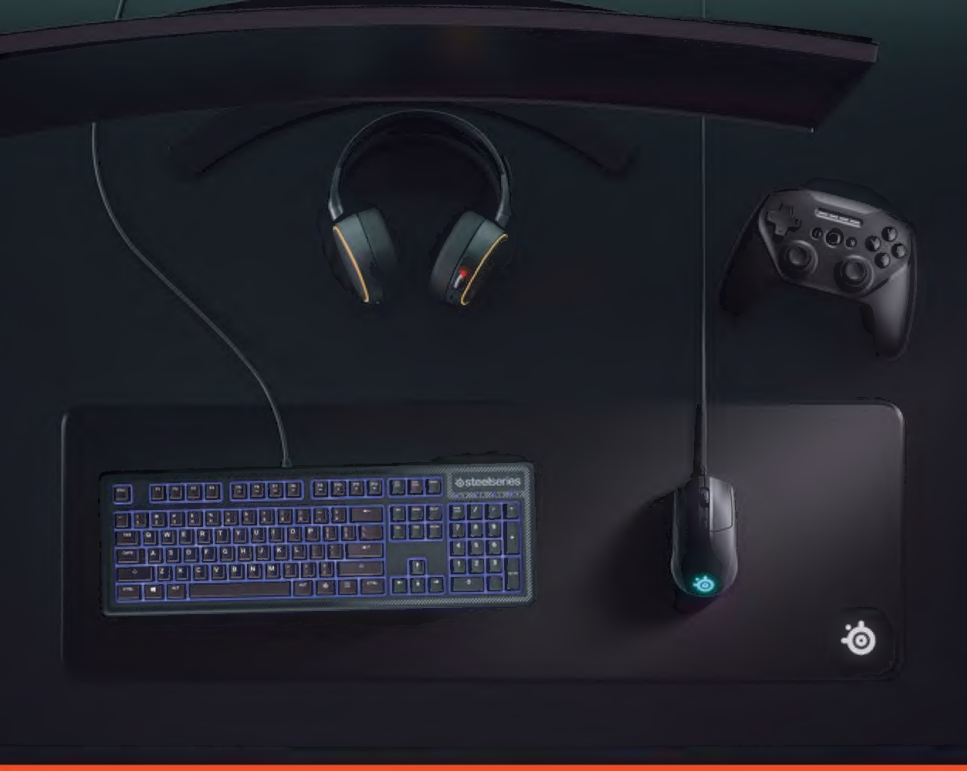
WGC: One of the unique elements to *Resident Evil 3* is that it takes place more on the streets of Raccoon City, instead of inside any particular building. How does this change the atmosphere and gameplay of the adventure?
PF: *Resident Evil 2* had claustrophobic spaces within the confines of the Raccoon Police Department. With *Resident Evil 3*, we had to balance out both interiors and exteriors. Since you are walking throughout more open spaces within the city itself, we had to work within those parameters to maintain a sense of suspense and survival horror. You'll find that even though you are outside, you never know where enemies might be lurking and we can play a lot with lighting and audio to keep up that feeling of tension. You'll also notice that we added the Quick Step and Perfect Dodge gameplay mechanics. They help change up the dynamic of how you approach combat and traversal.

WGC: *Resident Evil 3* focuses on fan-favorite series heroine Jill Valentine. How was she updated for the modern era?
PF: Jill has always been a strong character with the wherewithal to get through tough situations. She's still the Jill everyone knows and loves, but we were able to bring out a lot more of her personality thanks to her redesign, as well as modern performance capture and voice over. You'll see a lot more developed characterization, especially with her dialogue and back and forth with [U.B.C.S. mercenary] Carlos Oliveira.

WGC: Of course, we can't talk about the game without mentioning the menacing Nemesis. While it might seem easy to compare him to *Resident Evil 2*'s Tyrant, how does he differ in terms of threat and abilities compared to his predecessor?
PF: Both pose threats in their own right, but you'll quickly realize that Nemesis is faster and more agile than his *RE2* counterpart. He can use his tentacles to grab Jill or quickly cover long distances, which can add a terrifying element of surprise when he suddenly appears near you. Let's not forget that Nemesis can use weapons like rocket launchers and flame throwers, demonstrating his higher level of intelligence. Although Nemesis is a bioweapon prototype, he's an evolution of a Tyrant with a few extra tricks up his sleeves.

WGC: If you had to survive the zombie breakout in Raccoon City, how do you think you'd fare?
PF: Though I've been in crisis situations before, I don't have much training in firearms, so I certainly don't think I'd survive too long alone. If I could call on anyone [to help me], I think it'd have to be Jill, especially given how resilient and dependable she is—not to mention how much time I feel I've spent with the character. She knows the city well and is highly trained, so I can't think of anyone better.

GAME HIGHLIGHTS
RESIDENT EVIL 2
SHINSEKAI: INTO THE DEPTHS



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